(vii) The fiscal duty structure has been generally rationalised to achieve growth and maximum value addition within the country. Except for mandatory excise duty on man-made filament yarns and man-made staple fibres, the whole value addition chain has been given excise exemption option.

(viii) The imports of specified textiles and garment machinery items has been allowed at concessional rate of customs duty to encourage investments and to make our textile products competitive in the global market. The cost of machinery has also been reduced through fiscal policy measures.

(ix) Duty-free imports of 21 items of trimmings and embellishment items are allowed to the garment exporters, upto 3% of their actual export performance during the previous year.

(x) National Institute for Fashion Technology (NIFT), its six branches and Apparel Training and Design Centres (ATDCs) are running various courses/programmes to meet skilled manpower requirements of textile industry especially apparel in the field of design, merchandising and marketing.

(xi) Facilities by way of eco-testing laboratories have been created to enable exporters to get the garments/textiles pre-tested for conforming to the requirements of importing countries.

Economic assistance to artisans and weavers

†3085. SHRI LAXMINARAYAN SHARMA: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have fixed a target for providing economic assistance to artisans and weavers under self employment credit card scheme;

(b) the number of artisans and weavers benefited so far from the said scheme; and

(c) the scheme of Government to promote handloom knitted garments in view of termination of multi-fibre agreement in December, 2004?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI SHANKERSINH VAGHELA): (a) A target for issuance of one lakh Artisan Credit Cards (ACCs) has been

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

fixed to smoothen credit flow to handicrafts artisans. As regards Swarojgar Credit Card (SCC), under which weavers are covered, no sector-wise target has been fixed by NABARD.

(b) As reported by banks, 23869 artisans have been benefited so far under ACC. Since SSC covers other vocations also, segregated figures of number of weavers covered are not maintained.

(c) Handloom export at present, predominantly consist of fabrics and made-ups. The share of garments in the export is quite minimal and negligible. However, the Government has a scheme called Handloom Export Scheme to promote export of handloom products in general including the handloom garments.

Ban on Indian companies by US

3086. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that US has banned 5 Indian textile companies for quota fraud; and

(b) if so, the details thereof with action plan of Government to control recurrence of such incidents?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI SHANKERSINH VAGHELA): (a) It had come to notice that certain textile exporters had wrongly utilised the visas issued in certain categories of items for clearing the exports of another set of items covered by Group-II limits. The US customs have been requested that the shipments of five Indian exporter firms suspected to have indulged in visa malpractices may be cleared after consultation with Indian authorities.

(b) As the textile quota regime has come to an end on 1.1.2005, there is no scope for such malpractices in the future. However, suitable action is being taken against such exporters found to have misused the visas. They were temporarily debarred from exporting under Textile Quota Policy. The Enforcement Committee has requested for further clarifications from the US authorities, pending receipt of which the temporary debarment order remain in force against these exporters. A reference has been made to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for making a detaild enquiry into the whole affair.